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RAIL TRAVEL newsletter

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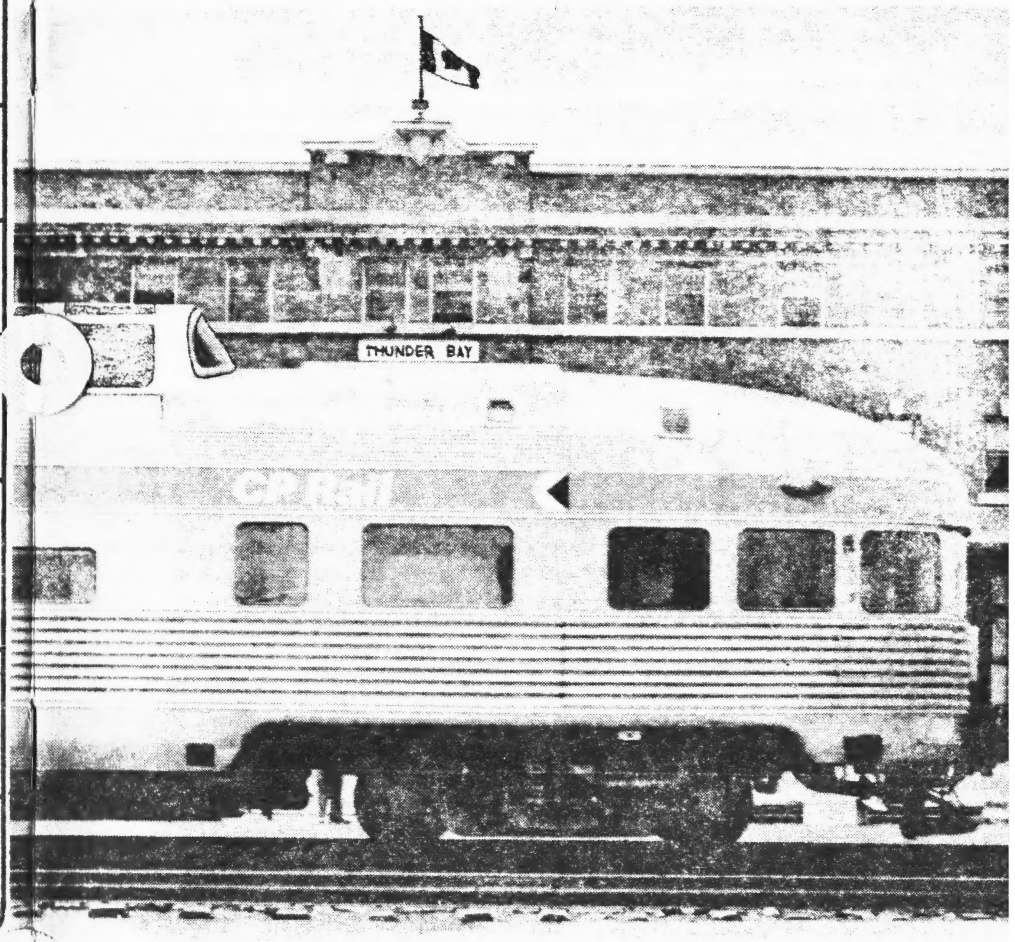
VOL. 2 NO. 24
DECEMBER 18, 1972



Rail Travel Canada

ON THE COVER: Paul Rayton "posed" the westbound Canadian Pacific CANADIAN in front of the Thunder Bay, Ontario station last September 3. (Thunder Bay is a recent consolidation of Ft. Arthur and Ft. William.) Paul's story of his Canadian adventures continues in this issue, starting on page 6, and concludes in the January 1 RTN.

LETTERS

The vaunted November double issue of RTN, alas, contained double errors. In his narrative of eastern Amtrak travel, George Hyko mentioned that his PC E unit on the VALLEY FORGE was changed for a GG-1 at Harrisburg. Harrisburg, of course, is in Pennsylvania, and neither the VALLEY FORGE nor any other Northeast Corridor train runs within 60 miles of that city. On the former New Haven, electrics are changed at New Haven, Connecticut.

Also, the recent PANAMA LIMITED derailment was not the third within the past 18 months; it was at least the fifth. Last March, the PANAMA derailed while making the backup maneuvers necessary in exiting Union Station. Some 10 cars left the rails, including several filled with choir members on their way to a religious concert in New Orleans. These people sang hymns to the workmen who arrived some two hours later to jack their coaches on the tracks, making a gruesome spectacle for the cameramen from the 10 o'clock news. Later, the SHAWNEE experienced a minor derailment somewhere on its northbound run. Local fans cannot explain the IC's accident-prone nature; Casey Jones was an IC engineer, however, and may have set an unlucky precedent. Freight trains, too, fall off IC's tracks. The first run of the highly touted Rent-a-Train derailed not once, but twice.

Michael W. Blaszak

Park Ridge, Ill.

(Ed. note: Mr. Hyko pleads that he had cigar smoke in his eyes and misread his timetable.)

Altho Mr. Hyko found the NIGHT OWL rather lightly patronized, this isn't always the case. It does pretty well on Friday and Sunday nights. I recently took a jaunt from Baltimore to Boston aboard the OWL. The conductor informed a prospective sleeping car patron on the platform here that all space was gone that Friday night. The coaches did well too. In the morning the lounge was jumping with those looking for some early morning snacks, with a wait of several minutes necessary as the waiter tried to keep up with things. We also had two head end cars, with the crew here in Baltimore loading and unloading a couple of carts full. Shades of the old days. We arrived in Boston 5 minutes early.

Kenneth A. Maylath

Baltimore, Md.

There are odd goings-on in San Diego these days. No. 776 returns to L.A. as #775. No. 778, the later morning L.A. departure, returns as the earlier #777. However, the power is swapped after the trains are turned, so that the power from #776 pulls #777. The crew that turns the trains and swaps the power informs me that the reason involves getting the units to a place and time where the required

(Continued on page 15)

Rail Travel Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 24 (Whole No. 50), December 18, 1972.
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White House Kills New Amtrak Routes

President Nixon's Office of Management and Budget has refused to release the $9 million voted by Congress late in 1972 to cover the establishment of Amtrak passenger service to Mexico and in the San Joaquin Valley of California and to cover expenses on other "experimental" routes. The money was voted Amtrak as a rider on another appropriations measure, and as such was signed by President Nixon. Now, however, the OMB is balking at releasing the money earmarked for Amtrak.

Without the $9 million--the equivalent of about four cents per capita--Amtrak will have to abandon plans to run a new train from St. Louis through Arkansas to Laredo, TX for connection with the Mexican National Railways. (Many promoters of the route had hoped that the train would run thru Dallas, a city of nearly one million people currently without passenger train service; however, Amtrak's railroad-dominated board of directors at a recent meeting decided that the route should bypass Dallas, running instead Texarkana-Longview-Jacksonville-Palestine-Milano-San Marcos-San Antonio-Laredo. The Dallas Times Herald expressed "shock" at the decision and pointed out that the approved route serves many fewer people and is thus economically much less viable than the hoped-for Dallas-Waco-Temple route. The Arkansas Gazette (Dec. 22) urged readers to write public officials to try to influence Amtrak's board to alter its decision at its Jan. 25 meeting. Now, however, even the entire route thru Arkansas is to be abandoned, and the Mexican service will probably be set up as a small connection off the TEXAS CHIEF.)

The loss of the relatively small $9 million appropriation means also that the planned revival of the SAN JOAQUIN DAYLIGHT is to be abandoned, unless funds from other sources become available. The SAN JOAQUIN was dropped when Amtrak began operation May 1, 1971, leaving the important California valley without passenger train service (Santa Fe's SAN FRANCISCO CHIEF, also running thru the valley, was likewise dropped when Amtrak took over). There presently exists no passenger rail route to the important National Parks adjoining the valley--Yosemite, Sequoia, and Kings Canyon--, as well as to the growing cities of Fresno, Bakersfield, and other valley points. Ground travelers are forced to use the hazardous and monotonous interstate highway 5, infamous for ground fogs and massive pileups of trucks and cars in zero visibility. The main route from San Francisco Bay Area points to Yosemite and valley cities is interstate 580, recently the scene of numerous highway crashes. (On Dec. 14 31 cars and trucks smashed together in one huge and almost comical pileup, leaving 15 people injured but fortunately no deaths. In ground fog, and with icy pavement in the Altamont Pass area--adjoining the old CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR route--the vehicles crashed in one huge tangle, including tanker trucks that spewed hydrochloric acid, glue, and white paint over the road. The Highway Patrol had to shut down the route at least four hours to clean up the mess, and called it a "miracle" that there were no fatalities.) The loss of the planned rail service into the valley comes as a severe blow to rail travel promoters in the West.

The Budget Office's attitude toward the small appropriation likewise does not presage a promising orientation toward further funding for Amtrak when the corporations's two-year "experimental" period expires early in 1973.

THE WINTER SEASON CHANGES IN AMTRAK'S SCHEDULING

There won't be another nationwide timetable out until April, and the latest one (Oct. 29) must be about out of stock. Amtrak issued 4 timetables to cover most of the Dec. 15 schedule changes: an Eastern Corridor timetable, a N.Y.-Washington timetable, a N.Y.-Philadelphia schedule, and one for Chicago-Detroit. The daily schedule of the COAST STARLIGHT and the operation of the two Chicago-Seattle trains as separate trains over their whole route for the season aren't shown in any Amtrak schedule.

Those who thought that Northeast Corridor changes would be minimal Dec. 15 were in for a surprise.

Prior to the MONTREALER, Amtrak had two thru trains from Springfield to N.Y., with no change in New Haven, leaving in early morning. In October this was changed to give one train out of Hartford, connecting with the 7:50am METROLINER out of New Haven, and a 7am run out of Springfield which terminated in New Haven and required a change of trains, to an MTA run from New Haven to N.Y.--the connection not even indicated in Amtrak's timetable. None of these trains apparently offered the opportunity to get so much as a cup of coffee, except for the extra-fare METROLINER, which isn't allowed to run at high speeds on the former New Haven, therefore not making the run faster than conventional trains. This state of affairs has been changed, to provide a 6:30am conventional run out of Springfield, with parlor car and snack coach. It continues thru N.Y. to Washington, filling the former SILVER STAR schedule south of N.Y., now that the STAR runs as a separate train.

The rest of the day, service is better scheduled from Springfield as well. It got the short end of the deal in October, with gaps of 5 hrs or more in both directions during mid-day. That was partially caused by the Oct. 29 rescheduling of the BAY STATE (Boston-N.Y. via Worcester). For the past several timetables before Oct. 29 it left Boston about 11am southbound and N.Y. at 11:10am north. It was changed to a 6am Boston departure in October to let passengers spend part of the day in N.Y. before leaving at 4:20pm on the northbound trip (this was actually an extension of a train to Springfield on to Boston). As of Dec. 15, another big adjustment: it now leaves Boston 1:20pm except Saturday, when its South Station departing time is 8:20am. It still leaves N.Y. about the same time. Slight rescheduling and elimination of a couple stops cut total running time by 8 minutes.

When the former midday departures from either end were changed, the previous schedule was cut back to New Haven, with a set of equipment coming from Washington turned around there and headed back south after a couple hours layover. This is what contributed to that big gap in service to Springfield during the day. Now, there is a conventional train out of N.Y. at 2:10pm thru to Springfield. Also an oddball 2:30am from New Haven to Springfield, apparently started to get equipment up there for the morning. It replaces a short-lived connection from New Haven to Springfield off the NIGHT OWL, which existed for the duration of the Oct. 29 schedule only.

Some interesting adjustments occurred in the Boston-N.Y. Shoreline schedules. If George Hyko wanted to choke on cigar smoke in the parlor car of the VALLEY FORGE now, he'd have to be at South Station two hours earlier--5:25am. This early departure is designed primarily for down line points--it makes all the stops, and lets people from New London and Old Saybrook arrive in N.Y. at 10:05am for a full day of business. This seems to be a result of pressure on Amtrak from commuters in that area unhappy ever since the discontinuance of the "Clamdigger" RDC out of New London, written up in RTN earlier (Vol.2,No.3). For those wanting a later train, and not wanting to take the 7am TURBO, there's the PATRIOT at 8am--restoring a departure time long used by the New Haven for its first thru train to Washington in the morning. After the PC takeover (pre-Amtrak) this was eased out to 7:55, then 7:45. This train and a couple others now make the run to N.Y. to 4 hrs, 25 mins, with a minimum of stops. For southbound trains in particular, secondary stops have been concentrated on 3 runs, allowing better schedules for several of the other trains. For example, this run fills a similar schedule south of N.Y. as did the VALLEY FORGE when it left Boston at 7:25--arriving in Washington just 5 mins later, even tho its 8am departure from Boston is 35 mins later--a net saving of 30 mins.

Indeed, the new 12 noon departure from Boston has an overall running time of 8 hrs 23 mins to Washington. This train, now carrying the MINUTE MAN name, is the 4:45pm departure from N.Y., making the fastest conventional run in either direction between N.Y. and Washington--3 hrs 38 mins. The overall Boston-Washington schedule is the fastest conventional train time since the late 1950's when the New Haven and PRR had an 8 hr 15 min timing.

The NIGHT OWL now leaves 15 mins later from Boston, at 10:30pm. TURBO departures from Boston are slightly adjusted so they fit the pattern of on-the-hour departures, rather than 5 mins past--7 and 11am. They are unchanged in the other direction at 12:10 and 4:10pm.

Another significant change is the 7:05am train from Washington, which used to be the BAY STATE to Boston via Springfield. In October it became the CONNECTICUT YANKEE and terminated in New Haven, as mentioned earlier. In both cases there was a 4-hour gap, from 9:10am to 1:10pm, in Boston departures out of N.Y. via the Shore Line. No longer. Known as the PATRIOT, it operates to Boston via Providence. Where there had been hourly service in the afternoons N.Y. to Boston over that route, the 2:10pm from N.Y. is now the aforementioned thru run to Springfield. This gives a better arrangement of N.Y.-Boston Shore runs of 9:10, 11:10, 1:10, 3:10, with the TURBO thrown in at 12:10.

That on-again-off-again 5am run out of Washington, the BUNKER HILL, is on again, but now called the MINUTE MAN. There were quite a few protests when its origin was cut back from Washington to Philadelphia this last time in October. Forty or 50 riders would board in Baltimore alone on weekdays, despite the early departure. The present setup apparently is that the MERCHANTS LIMITED equipment, which arrives in Washington at 1:30am, goes back out as this train.

Between Washington and N.Y. there are relatively few changes other than what has already been mentioned. One difference, tho, is that several of the N.Y.-Philadelphia runs now stop at Metropark.

There seem to be virtually no adjustments in the Philadelphia-Harrisburg service. A tightening up of the westbound NATIONAL LIMITED and BROADWAY times between N.Y. & Harrisburg remains the same as in the October schedule. The Metropark stop for the NATIONAL was dropped in the October setup.

There was a definite change, again, in the Montreal train. Southbound, while leaving Montreal at the same time (7:30pm), arrival in N.Y. is 12 mins later. Rather than its serving as part of the N.Y.-D.C. departure at 8, there is now a separate N.Y.-Philadelphia run at 8. The WASHINGTONIAN has a longer N.Y. layover, leaving at 8:35, and arriving in the nation's capitol at 12:25. One reason, in all probability, is the problem caused when it was late into N.Y., making it necessary to run a separate train at 8, or leaving local passengers all down the line waiting for 30 mins or more. Northbound, a full hour and 20 mins has been added, with the Montreal arrival at 10:25 rather than 9:15. Most of this time has been added between Springfield and Brattleboro, on the B&M. One suspects that a large part of the explanation may be a desire for a more convenient arrival time at various Vermont points. Someone heading to a ski trip around Waterbury, VT, would rather detrain at 6:40am than at 5:30. And since the 9:15 Montreal arrival still didn't allow making quick connections to such places as Ottawa and Quebec City, the later time probably doesn't mean very much to the riders heading into Canada.

The expanded service to Florida is rolling now, of course. Local investigation disclosed that all four trains were completely sold out from their Dec. 15 inception thru Christmas. Amtrak did some newspaper advertising for the Florida service, mentioning the second gourmet dining car on the METEOR. Presumably this is an eastern version of the SUPER CHIEF, with a separate menu for the second diner at higher prices.

One slight change on the Empire Service runs: the former 6pm run to Albany out of N.Y. has been moved to 6:30. It will work out nicely for those transferring from Penn Station off the BUNKER HILL at 5:55 or METROLINER at 6:01 from the south.

--Kenneth Maylath

Rail Travel Canada

by Paul Rayton

PART TWO

We had just finished unpacking when Bingo was announced. The balance of the trip to Truro was scenic but two observations must be made: 1) we never made up all our lost time (this was to be the only late train we encountered) and 2) somewhere in the consist was a car with braking problems, for it was virtually impossible for the train to be started without a most distracting lurch. At first I attributed it to a specific engineer, but it persisted through several division points, so mechanical problems were clearly indicated.

At Truro, a major junction point, Train 14 split, with one portion heading south to Halifax, and our portion heading east 230 miles further to the Cape Breton area and the city of Sydney. After the split at Truro, we had 2 baggage cars, 2 sleepers, the lunch counter dinette car, 2 coaches, and a coach/snackbar/lounge car. The 2½ coaches showed a passenger count of 130 late in the trip.

The mainline of the CN runs to Halifax, not out to Sydney, so we were traveling by train orders between Truro and Sydney. We had almost made up our lateness when we experienced the only really bad dispatching goof of our trip; we went in the hole for 50 minutes to wait for an opposing freight. That effectively knocked us so far off schedule that an on-time arrival was impossible. We left Port Hawkesbury 53 minutes late. Arrival at Sydney was 9:45 pm, 30 minutes tardy.

Our return to Truro from Sydney introduced us to the local service along the route. In addition to the full-service train of the OCEAN, a second round trip is provided by CNR RAILINER. By comparison with the sparsely filled CP DAYLINER trains we had ridden, this one was an experience. Two RDCs, #6100 and 6107, and west of Port Hawkesbury the passenger count was over 150. Soon the limited space was completely filled and the Conductor was forced to turn people away. I was told that those making connections at Truro would be taken there by taxi, as Canadian law forbids standees.

RDC #6107 had sacrificed several seats so that a mini-snack bar could be installed, serving hot drinks, sandwiches, and other snacks. And both cars had very modern interiors, unlike any other RDC's I had seen---pleasing, contemporary colors and recently-designed, comfortable seating, the elements that seem to be the hallmark of CN passenger service.

At Truro, we changed back to the OCEAN for the short trip to Halifax. Inbound to Halifax on this August 31 were 1 baggage car, 5 coaches, the 48-seat diner, the sleeper/lounge, 4 sleepers, and a crew car. The lead engine was a dead ringer for an Alco PA. Inquiry brought out that it was of MLW (Montreal Locomotive Works) Manufacture, but to U.S. designs.

Our next experience was with Train #1 of the Dominion Atlantic Railway, a thinly disguised subsididary of CP. Waiting for the train had been rather interesting in the Halifax CN (and used by DAR) station---some station employes entertained waiting passengers by playing a record of steam engine sounds over the station p.a. system.

The train, also known as the FAST EVANGELINE service, turned out to be another CP RDC DAYLINER, this time #9059. The trip was another scenic one, and again interesting for its local service aspect. Most of the flag-stop stations have been torn down, so to flag-stop the train passengers are obliged to stand near a grade crossing and wait with no weather protection. There was only one such, a lady we picked up at S. Uniacke.

The amicable Conductor said that RDC's had been brought in on this line way back in 1956. There was a total crew of two, an engineer and he, the Conductor.

Food service was provided about half way on our journey when we stopped at Kentville, which had an active lunch counter in the station. Those desiring to buy food were captive but eager patrons of the small but well-stocked shop. Shades of Fred Harvey, I thought.

By the numbers of boats lying on exposed mud flats, I knew we were along the coast of the Bay of Fundy, and nearing Digby where we would catch a CP boat over to St. John, N.B.

At Digby, the entire DAR passenger "fleet" came together (the other being RDC #9060) as passengers made connections to the boat. Until recently these DAR trains went right out onto the pier for boat passengers. Now, however, the boat terminal has been moved about 4 miles out of town and a taxi ride is necessary. Plenty of drivers are there to solicit your business, even though you are treated like a sardine.

Arriving in St. John, we found the CP rail station inconveniently moved out to the fringes of town, and once again another cab ride was called for. Not so long ago, both CP boat and CP train stopped at St. John Union Station (still used by CN), virtually in the heart of town. Now the CP boat terminal and the train station have been moved some distance away--and to two different places at that.

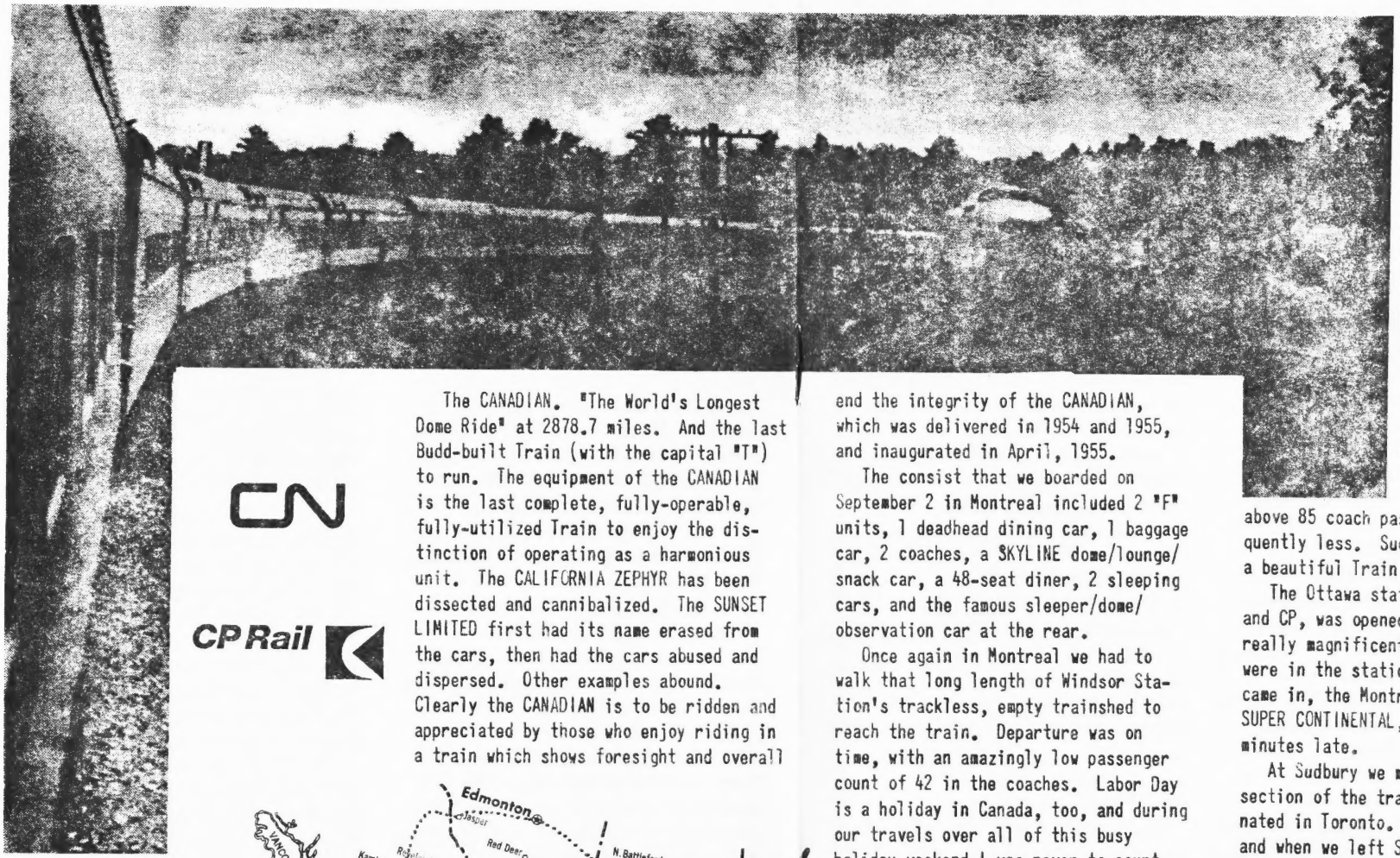
The ATLANTIC LIMITED is Canadian Pacific's "other" prestige train, the premier of course being the CANADIAN. Providing overnight service from St. John to Montreal, it is one of the few trains that pass through U.S. towns while en route--and are not affiliated with Amtrak. It is also the only train on the North American Continent that operates dome cars anywhere north and east of Lorton, Va. (that being Autotrain).

The consist of the ATLANTIC LIMITED was one veteran "E" unit (in old Canadian Pacific grey-and-maroon dress) #1800, 1 baggage car, 2 sleeping cars, a SKYLINER dome/lounge/diner, and two coaches. The train was moderately patronized; at McAdam, just before we crossed the border into Maine, I counted some 70 coach passengers and estimated a sleeping-car load factor of 90-95%. Also at McAdam Canadian Customs men board the train and seal up all doors in the food and lounge area and in the baggage car. A corresponding man would unseal the cars once the train returned to Canadian soil. I was told that U.S. Customs agents met the train at each U.S. station stop to check for any detraining passengers. I did not personally observe these men, however.

The SKYLINE car had a snack menu for lunch and dinner, and a separate breakfast menu. The prices were quite reasonable and the food acceptable. I was pleased that they were open for supper and snacks upon departure, even with its comparatively late departure hour (from St. John) of 8:50 pm. The 16-seat serving area was operating at capacity for some time.

Up in the dome, I noted from the film on the windows that the car was only washed at the Montreal end of the line.

The roadbed started out exceptionally smooth, but after about 20 miles deteriorated to just average. Judging from the noise level, much of the line was of welded rail. At any rate, we slept well.



Just east of Capreol, Paul made this unusual photo from a vestibule of the eastbound SUPER CONTINENTAL. On the adjoining track is CP's CANADIAN, its two domes just rounding the curve as the two transcontinental Canadian trains run side-by-side for a few brief seconds.

CN

CP Rail

The CANADIAN. "The World's Longest Dome Ride" at 2878.7 miles. And the last Budd-built Train (with the capital "T") to run. The equipment of the CANADIAN is the last complete, fully-operable, fully-utilized Train to enjoy the distinction of operating as a harmonious unit. The CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR has been dissected and cannibalized. The SUNSET LIMITED first had its name erased from the cars, then had the cars abused and dispersed. Other examples abound. Clearly the CANADIAN is to be ridden and appreciated by those who enjoy riding in a train which shows foresight and overall scheme to decor rather than the haphazard jumble so often seen today. I cannot urge this on you too urgently. CP claims a loss on the CANADIAN alone of over $15,000,000 in 1968, and rumors continue to circulate of an eventual CN and CP combination of routes and services. Such an eventuality would undoubtedly end the integrity of the CANADIAN, which was delivered in 1954 and 1955, and inaugurated in April, 1955.

The consist that we boarded on September 2 in Montreal included 2 "F" units, 1 deadhead dining car, 1 baggage car, 2 coaches, a SKYLINE dome/lounge/snack car, a 48-seat diner, 2 sleeping cars, and the famous sleeper/dome/observation car at the rear.

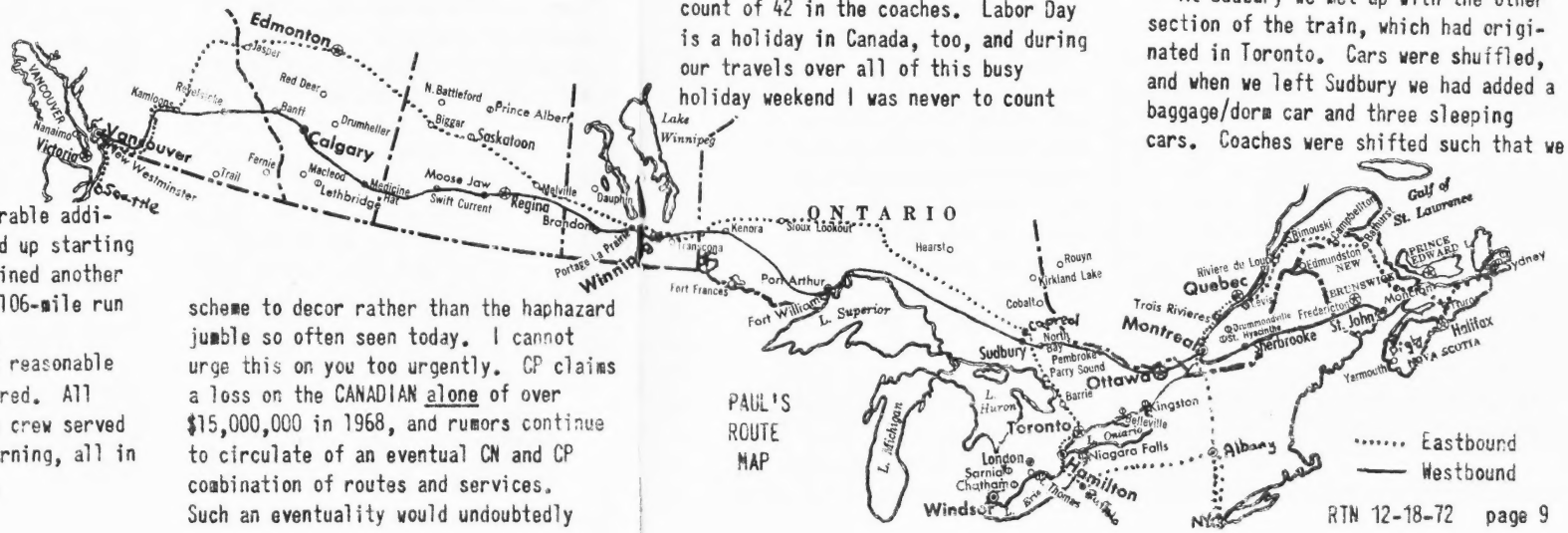
Once again in Montreal we had to walk that long length of Windsor Station's trackless, empty trainshed to reach the train. Departure was on time, with an amazingly low passenger count of 42 in the coaches. Labor Day is a holiday in Canada, too, and during our travels over all of this busy holiday weekend I was never to count above 85 coach passengers, and frequently less. Such a low load on such a beautiful Train was most depressing.

The Ottawa station, shared by CN and CP, was opened in 1966 and is a really magnificent structure. While we were in the station, a long CN train came in, the Montreal section of the SUPER CONTINENTAL, running about 8 minutes late.

At Sudbury we met up with the other section of the train, which had originated in Toronto. Cars were shuffled, and when we left Sudbury we had added a baggage/dorm car and three sleeping cars. Coaches were shifted such that we

In the morning, considerable additional patronage was picked up starting in Sherbrooke--where we gained another coach--as people made the 106-mile run into Montreal for the day.

Breakfast was served at reasonable cost and it was well prepared. All fruit was from a can. The crew served some 85 breakfasts that morning, all in their quite limited space.



PAUL'S ROUTE MAP

..... Eastbound
—— Westbound

still had only two coaches for the long trip westward. Passenger count was now 80 in coach, and a load in the sleeping cars of between 103 and 111, for an occupancy factor of about 75%.

Departure from Sudbury had been over half an hour late, but by next morning we were back on time.

Food service left a variety of impressions. Of course each meal must be paid for on the CP, so many people economized by skipping some meals, or patronizing the SKYLINE car for its more reasonable prices. The SKYLINE dome cars were created by the CP out of former dome coaches. Ever see a dining car with a luggage rack?

In the full dining car itself, we were presented with contrasts between the "old" era of lavish service, and the "new" management that is concerned with cutting costs: an expensive array of silver serving dishes and teapots on oilcloth table tops with paper napkins! Only for the evening dinner was there full linen service. Menu prices ran about equal to or slightly above those for comparable items on the CN menus. Reservations were taken for dinner on the CANADIAN, but I never once saw the dining car crowded. Three seatings were called over the train's public address system. There was less business, of course, because people were either eating in the SKYLINE diner, or skipping the meal.

The interiors of the dining cars were done in the usual Budd colors. The ceilings were variously pink, blue, or grey, and covered with small stars, a la the French Quarter lounges from the SUNSET. The interiors were strictly as they had been delivered from the builders, no updating attempted.

The CANADIAN dining car was more classy than that of the SUPER CONTINENTAL, from the implements standpoint. Coffee was served in a silver pot, set on a silver tray. Silver flatware comprised 2 forks, 2 knives, and 3 spoons. Sugar, butter, and sauces all had individual silver containers. And the wine list was more varied and distinguished. The menus for breakfast (identical in diner and SKYLINE cars) and for lunch did not change; a different dinner menu was used each evening. Every crew with which we dealt was extremely pleasant and friendly. There was not the CN

Canadian Pacific

preponderance of young people working on this train, but mostly seasoned veterans.

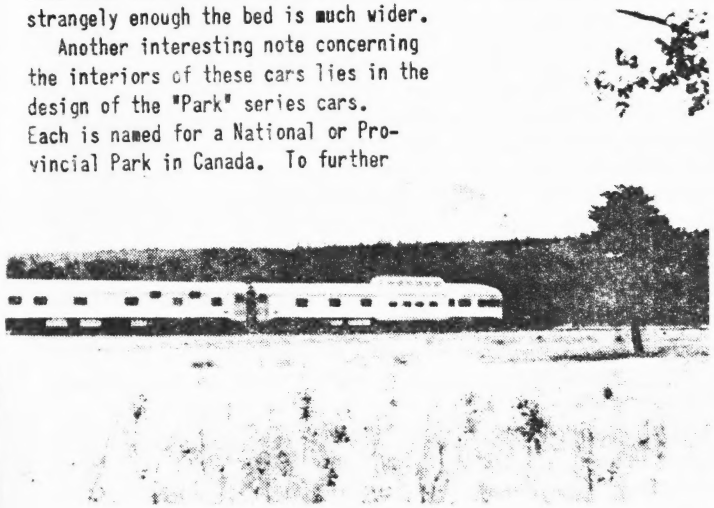
As is the custom with other trains, sleeping car designs are identified by their names. Regular service on the CANADIAN uses three styles of car: "Chateau ---" cars which have 8 "duplex roomettes" (known in the U.S. as "sleepercoach" rooms), 3 bedrooms, 1 drawingroom, and 4 open sections. "---Manor" cars have 4 roomettes, 5 bedrooms, 1 compartment, and 4 sections. And "---Park" cars are the 3 bedroom/1 drawing room/dome/observation on the end. A typical summer consist included 3 "Chateau", 2 "Manor", and 1 "Park" cars.

Because of the great diversity of equipment on the CN trains, I did not mention earlier the presence of a large number of open sections on all trains with sleeping car service. Their presence--and their great popularity--on both the CN and the CP evoked the observation that perhaps Amtrak needs to analyze traffic patterns in Canada a bit more closely. The "sections", just like those often seen in the movies, were very heavily patronized, both by single travelers and by families. One family of five (!) was traveling on the CANADIAN in merely two sections. For those interested in traveling on a budget, this seems to be an excellent alternative. More comfortable than coach, but far less expensive than full bedroom space. And strangely enough the bed is much wider.

Another interesting note concerning the interiors of these cars lies in the design of the "Park" series cars. Each is named for a National or Provincial Park in Canada. To further create a unique motif for each car, the space beneath the dome has been titled the "Mural Lounge" and the entire area designed of original artwork murals illustrating some area of the park of the car's namesake. The car named "Kootenay Park", for example, has a signed painting entitled "Kootenay National Park, B.C.", and beneath that, "painted by George D. Pepper, A.R.C.A., O.S.A." Above the car's writing desk would be a painted map showing the location of the specific park.

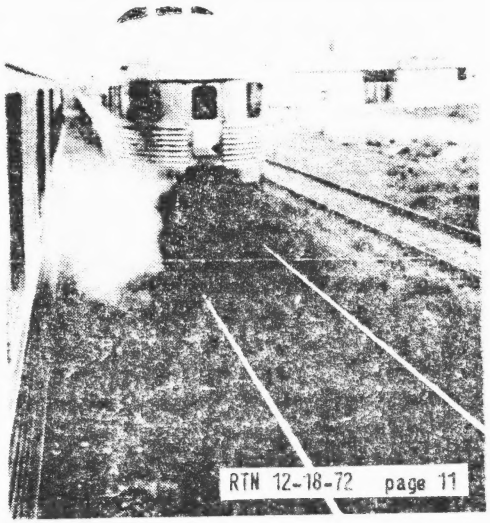
Speaking of interior furnishings, the bedrooms deserve attention. Windows were furnished with curtains, a very singular feature, and one which makes quite a difference in the "warmth" of the accommodation. Furthermore, every room had a small watercolor painting mounted for another little touch of grace. Our bedroom "C" in "Brant Manor" was entitled "Autumn", with a credit line, "from a painting by F.H. Brigdon."

I mention these little features because they were all achieved with minimal expense, but the overall effect is to lend much more personality and interest to a train, and there just is nothing remaining in the States to match it.



At left, the westbound CP CANADIAN arrives at Banff National Park on Sept. 5, 1972. Below, two CANADIANS meet near the carwash just west of Calgary.

It seems you can't ride a train anywhere anymore without an air conditioning failure. As luck would have it, the defective car was the dome/lounge/observation car. It had gone bad shortly out of Montreal. At night it wasn't too bad, but during the day it was all but useless except for steam bathing. When we



approached Winnipeg it was learned that another car would be put on in its place. Now Winnipeg, as on the CN, is the approximate mid-point of the trip, and a crew change point. The timetable allows 30 minutes for the stop, but I knew that, what with changing the crews, plus switching engines, switching the rear dome cars, and transferring the stock of the bad-ordered car to the lockers of the replacement, there was no way we could leave on time.

I didn't take any chances, however, and was on board watching from a vestibule window. Amazingly, not only was another "Park" car ready to substitute, but it was switched and the necessary stock transfers were effected and at 10:45 pm we were ready to depart. The Conductor called "All aboard"(though I still didn't believe what I was seeing and hearing). Some little delay occurred, and we were still sitting in the station about two minutes later when a loud, booming voice came over a trackside public address loudspeaker: "Attention, Conductor of train #1. Will you get that train OUT OF HERE?!" We left.

By the time we had reached Calgary, crossing over the dusty plains, the train was rather dirty and the windows needed a wash. The CANADIAN is washed just west of Calgary. During the Calgary station stop, men soaped over the windows. Then, when in motion again, we were sprayed with water and finally wiped by a big set of rolling brushes. Dome windows are cleaned, too, by men standing on platforms on either side of the train with long-handled hose mops, and they really scrub the dome windows. Not so different from the old days of the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR outside Denver. What's wrong, Amtrak? You even come in on the same trackage there.

Almost immediately outside Calgary you are climbing into the Rockies, heading for a more southerly but considerably higher crossing of the Continental Divide than that of the CN. This part of the trip is undoubtedly the most scenic, and is justifiably renowned for the magnificent vistas. (The scenery along the north shore of Lake Superior is very dramatic,too. I never expected such a rocky, craggy coastline there. It is not fair to not give that area just credit for its sights; it too often is slighted for the big mountains out West and shouldn't be.)

For some 50 miles the train travels along a valley surrounded by glacier-capped peaks. Railroading-wise, the spectacular part comes just west of the Continental Divide. Descending the western slopes, the CP mainline does a sort of double Tehachapi Loop, working down the grade by passing through two curved tunnels that bore through the heart of mountains and emerge over 50 feet lower than when it entered the tunnel. The upper tunnel is the longest, 3255 feet, curving through 288 degrees!

For our last dinner on the CANADIAN, my wife and I decided to live it up and have the $6.90 steak dinner. It was a bit overpriced, but worth the experience. The steak was good, thick, and tender, but let me also state that it was not the best I have ever eaten in a railroad dining car...

The CANADIAN had been precisely on time ever since Calgary, until in the yards just outside Vancouver we were held up 6 minutes, but after such a performance along the long route, I was willing to give CP those 6 minutes.

The conclusion of Paul's article--a ride on the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway--will appear in the Jan. 1 issue of RTN.

AMTRAK'S CHICAGO TURBO ROUTES REVEALED

Amtrak announced Dec. 28 that next summer Turbo Trains will be placed on the Chicago-Milwaukee and Chicago-St. Louis routes. Amtrak is leasing two 5-car French Turbos for two years with an option to buy them. The French National Railways agreed to give up two trainsets from 26 it now has on order so Amtrak might try out the vehicles. The trains will be fresh off the production lines of ANF-Frangeco, a leading French manufacturer. The French trains are frequently said to be quieter and more reliable than the American-built types.

In addition, Amtrak is acquiring two 4-car Turbos built by United Aircraft and used by Canadian National until recently. The CN trains will resume service next spring between Montreal and Toronto, and the trainsets Amtrak is getting are surplus due to consolidation of cars in consists. United Aircraft is presently modifying the trains for improved reliability.

The French Turbos have run for over two years on the 232-mile line from Paris to Cherbourg, and have logged over 5 million miles with 99% reliability. Amtrak has an option to purchase eight more French trains besides the two mentioned.

A new maintenance and service facility will be set up in the Chicago area to handle the turbine-powered trains.

CHIEF JUSTICE GETS PIPE AND CIGAR SMOKING BANNED IN METROCLUB CARS

It was an event that made front page headlines in some newspapers. On Nov. 28 Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Warren E. Burger and his wife rode in a Metroliner club car from Washington to New York and encountered three cigar smokers on the trip and four on the return. In a letter of complaint to Secretary of Transportation John Volpe, Burger told of the incident and the fact that a conductor told him he could escape the smoke only by moving to a non-smoking coach.

On Dec. 8 Amtrak decided to ban cigar and pipe smoking in Metroclub cars, though cigarette smokers are free to continue polluting the air of the extra-fare cars.

AMTRAK SNOW TRAINS TO RUN

Amtrak announced in December the addition of "Le Pub" car and a ski-rack equipped baggage car to the MONTREALER and WASHINGTONIAN for the benefit of skiers in New England and Canada. (These trains also now have a special bi-lingual menu.) The pub car offers live and taped music, with drinks, and operates northbound on Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday, and southbound Friday thru Monday.

Four "Snowball Specials" will operate from Los Angeles to Sun Valley, Idaho from early January thru mid-March, and an "experimental" ski special will run in late January from Vancouver, B.C., Seattle, Spokane and Portland, to Big Mountain, Montana.

Amtrak has published a free ski guide to Vermont and New Hampshire. Write to: Ski News, Box 474, Riverdale, MD 20840.

NEWS BRIEFS: The United Transportation Union is ready to go on strike against the Penn Central Jan. 12, when the PC plans to cut the size of its freight train crews from three to two..... Many of the news media are attempting to play down the import of a jumbo jetliner crash at Miami International Airport Dec. 30 that killed 100 people. Some newspapers reported in headlines only the fact that 82 were rescued. The crash was particularly embarrassing at this time when Pres. Nixon is set to revive the plan for a jumbo SST, while at the same time funds for rail travel improvement are being tightened up..... Central of New Jersey has been authorized by a federal judge in Newark to shut down all its commuter service by Jan. 21 unless further state support for the bankrupt railroad is promised..... Effective Dec. 15 the two Chicago-Detroit Amtrak trains leave Chicago at 7:15am and 4:15 pm, and leave Detroit at 8:30am and 5:45pm..... As Congress reconvenes, some members are planning to call for a court test to the legality of the Office of Management and Budget's withholding of funds that Congress has voted for various purposes..... Los Angeles Times ran a very fine illustrated article on Amtrak in its magazine section of Dec. 10..... Amtrak plans to cannibalize 38 cars it purchased, including 30 Santa Fe cars, mostly coaches, and some from wrecks.....

NOVEMBER'S MOST ON-TIME TRAIN

The SAN DIEGANS, one of which is pictured in Paul Rayton's photo above, proved to be Amtrak's best timekeepers in November, with a "near perfect" record of 98.1% on time. Amtrak released the figures Dec. 20, shown in the table below. (See RTN, Nov. 20)

SHORT HAUL		
New York/Washington Metroliner	800	69.3
Conventional	942	93.9
Boston/Washington	382	67.5
New York/Boston Shore Route	176	54.0
Inland Route	430	69.8
New York/Buffalo	302	80.8
Philadelphia/Harrisburg	458	81.7
Washington/Parkersburg	60	76.7
Chicago/Carbondale	60	45.0
Chicago/Detroit	120	89.2
Chicago/Quincy	60	63.3
Milwaukee/St. Louis	120	62.5
Chicago/Milwaukee	180	90.0
Seattle/Portland	180	92.8
Oakland/Los Angeles	35	80.0
Los Angeles/San Diego	155	98.1
TOTAL SHORT HAUL	3660	80.8

LONG DISTANCE ROUTES		
New York/Chicago	60	31.7
New York/Florida	240	59.2
New York/Kansas City	60	8.3
Washington/St. Louis	60	58.3
Chicago/Washington	60	31.7
Cincinnati/Washington	60	70.0
Chicago/Newport News	60	53.3
Chicago/Florida	120	35.8
Chicago/New Orleans	60	6.7
Chicago/Houston	60	80.0
Chicago/Los Angeles	60	43.3
Chicago/Denver	34	64.7
Chicago/Oakland	26	30.8
Chicago/Seattle	60	85.0
Chicago/Minneapolis	34	91.2
Chicago/Minneapolis/ Spokane	26	88.5
New Orleans/Los Angeles	25	64.0
Seattle/San Diego	26	80.8
Washington/Montreal	60	21.7
TOTAL LONG DISTANCE	1191	50.4
TOTAL AMTRAK	5651	72.8

These figures, for Nov. 1972, indicate on-time performance by route, with "on-time" defined as within 5 mins of time-table schedule. In each case the first column is number of trains run and the second is percent on-time.

(LETTERS: Continued from page 2)

daily tests of the Automatic Train Stop equipment can be performed. Incidentally, there are no hostlers in San Diego (or at least Amtrak doesn't use any), so the units are shut down and the switch crew then pretends they are cars and hauls them around with a switcher in making the change. The trains are turned at a wye some distance back toward L.A. at "Old Town." For a few days, the switcher was in use for this, but once again the trains are being backed using the road power. I haven't heard the reason for that particular experiment.

John W. Baxter

Escondido, Calif.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

BERKELEY DOESN'T have a passenger train stop anymore (since Amtrak), so why was the eastbound SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR taking on passengers there during a 30-min stop Dec. 16? Give up? Simple--it was loading passengers taxied from Oakland at Amtrak's expense. And why? Because the southbound COAST STARLIGHT which is supposed to arrive Oakland before the ZEPHYR's departure--but rarely does lately--neglected to drop off passengers at Davis who wanted to connect with the train to Chicago (when this "normal" Davis dropoff is done, does the ZEPHYR stop there to pick them up? Of course not. They are taxied to Sacramento, all at Amtrak's expense, of course. Better solutions: make Davis a regular stop for train #6, or run the STARLIGHT on time).... SPEAKING OF stopping at Berkeley, Thomas Parkinson, the U. of Calif. English Professor who spoke last spring about his experiences in giving up his auto, plans to run for city council in Berkeley, and his platform includes asking for an Amtrak stop for Berkeley, a Greyhound station for Berkeley, and a stop to the University's plans for yet another 1000-car parking lot..... MILWAUKEE ROAD's last four super domes (like those CN bought earlier) have been purchased by Amtrak..... BISTRO CARS were supposed to go on the MONTREALER this season, but instead were put on the Florida trains because of shortage of lounge cars. Car shortage wasn't helped by the derailment of the southbound SILVER STAR Dec. 13 near South Hill, VA. Eleven of 14 cars derailed but did not turn over, and 12 people were slightly injured, the worst with a possible fracture. There were 164 passengers aboard..... TWO OTHER recent rail mishaps on Amtrak: (no dates available) EMPIRE BUILDER suffered a minor derailment, and SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR broke in two.....

* * *

HOLIDAY HAPPINESS is: Having a banquet in the Turqoise Room of the SUPER CHIEF with Paul Rayton presiding, with authentic Turquoise Room ashtrays (for a group of non-smokers) and big bottles of champagne provided by Paul; watching the fantastic "Toccata for Toy Trains," the beautiful animated film of antique English toy trains by Ray & Charles Eames, with music by Elmer Bernstein, dug up by Mr. Rayton; getting a guided tour of Amtrak headquarters courtesy of Jim Bryant, NRPC's smiling public relations man; continuing to receive lots of letters and money from our friends out there in rail-land. Happy Holidays to one and all! And now back to more hard news ..... LAWYERS WHO have investigated the matter report that California law allows mixed passenger and freight (read auto carriers) cars provided the freight goes on the rear. SP said auto-carrying trains would be illegal in this state when Amtrak began to explore the idea a while back..... 'TIS THE season to be tardy: we're waiting to see Amtrak's on-time data for December. Every time we investigate here, the (now daily) COAST STARLIGHT-DAYLIGHT is late, with lateness measured more in hours than minutes. Lateness has been a nationwide problem, reports say, and part of the problem is the severe winter this year. Oh well, every other transportation mode was late too. And where can you go on closed highways?..... MOUNTAIN SERIES observation cars of the GN (5 of them), and the remaining SP dome lounges that George Hyko praised so highly in our last double issue have been purchased by Amtrak, reports correspondent Michael Blaszak.....